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SPEECH

OF

HON. JAMES H. BERRY,
OF ARKANSAS,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1900.

WASHINGTON.

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SPEECH
OF
HON. JAMES H. BERRY.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. President, I ask to have read the joint resolution introduced by the Senator from Georgia [Mr. BACON] on the 18th day of December with reference to the disposition of the Philippine Islands.

The PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Without objection, the Secretary will read the joint resolution introduced by the Senator from Georgia, which is on the table.

The Secretary read the joint resolution (S. R. 45) declaring the purpose of the United States with reference to the Philippine Islands, as follows:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Government and people of the United States have not waged the recent war with Spain for conquest and for the acquisition of foreign territory, but solely for the purposes set forth in the resolution of Congress making the declaration of war—the acquisition of such small tracts of land or harbors as may be necessary for governmental purposes being not deemed inconsistent with the same.

SEC. 2. That in demanding and in receiving the cession of the Philippine Islands it is not the purpose of the Government of the United States to secure and maintain permanent dominion over the same as a part of the territory of the United States, or to permanently incorporate the inhabitants thereof as citizens of the United States, or to hold said inhabitants as vassals or subjects of this Government; and the United States hereby disclaim any disposition or intention to exercise permanent sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said islands.

SEC. 3. That the United States, having accepted the cession of the Philippine Islands from Spain, and having by force of arms overthrown all organized authority and opposition to the authority of the United States therein, the duty and obligation rest upon the United States to restore peace and maintain order throughout the same; to protect in said islands the enjoyment of life and property and the pursuit of lawful avocations; and to continue such protection until the power and duty to maintain said protection shall have been transferred and intrusted by the United States to a government of the people of said islands deemed capable and worthy to exercise said power and discharge said duty.

SEC. 4. That when armed resistance to the authority of the United States shall have ceased within said islands, and peace and order shall have been restored therein, it is the purpose and intention of the United States, so soon

thereafter as the same can be practically and safely accomplished, to provide the opportunity and prescribe the method for the formation of a government by and of the people of the Philippine Islands, to be thereafter independently exercised and controlled by themselves, it being the design of the United States to accord to the people of said islands the same measure of liberty and independence which have been pledged by the Congress of the United States to the people of Cuba.

SEC. 5. That when a stable government shall, by the method aforesaid, have been duly formed and erected in said islands, competent and worthy, in the judgment of the United States, to exercise the powers of an independent government and to preserve peace and maintain order within its jurisdiction, it is the purpose and intention of the United States, reserving to themselves only such harbors and tracts of land as may be needed for coal-stations or other governmental purposes, to transfer to said government, upon terms which shall be reasonable and just, all rights and territory secured in said islands under the treaty with Spain, and to thereupon leave the dominion and control of the islands to their people.

SEC. 6. That when said government has been thus formed and set up in the Philippine Islands and approved by the United States, it is the design and intention of the United States, through treaties with the leading nations of the world, to secure the guaranty of the continued independence of the same.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. President, I desire also to have read the joint resolution introduced by the Senator from Indiana [Mr. BEVERIDGE] in regard to the course to be pursued with reference to the Philippine Islands.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the joint resolution will be read.

The Secretary read the joint resolution (S. R. 53) defining the policy of the United States relative to the Philippine Islands, as follows:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives, etc., That the Philippine Islands are territory belonging to the United States; that it is the intention of the United States to retain them as such and to establish and maintain such governmental control throughout the archipelago as the situation may demand.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. President, at the time the treaty between the United States and Spain was pending in the Senate for ratification there were a large number of Senators here who believed it to be the wisest and best policy to insert in that treaty a provision making the same promises in regard to giving free government to the people of the Philippine Islands which Congress had, when the declaration of war with Spain was made, given to the people of Cuba.

Those who opposed that amendment of the treaty insisted at that time that it was important the treaty should be ratified at once in order that war should cease; that the whole question would be

left open to the disposition of Congress thereafter, and that no prejudice would come to those who desired to finally dispose of the Philippine Islands in the same manner which was thought proper in the case of Cuba by the ratification of the treaty of peace. The President himself said that Congress would have entire jurisdiction of the matter; and those who argued against that amendment repeatedly stated upon this floor that when the subject came before Congress the entire question would be open for full discussion.

Now, Mr. President, the time has come when resolutions are presented here representing, I take it, the different views of the people of the United States as to the course to be pursued. And now, when those who believe that the Philippine people should be entitled to the same rights and privileges which we had promised to give to the Cuban people undertake to debate the subject upon the floor of the Senate, we are told that we are aiding those who are in rebellion against the United States; that we are giving aid and comfort to men with arms in their hands, who are shooting at our soldiers, and that we, who opposed from the very beginning the method which has been pursued, are responsible for the death of our gallant soldiers who have fallen or who may fall in those islands. I submit to the Senate and to the people of the United States whether or not this is fair treatment.

I furthermore say that I apprehend that no man imbued with proper principles, who believes that the course proposed by the resolution offered by the Senator from Indiana will have the effect eventually to destroy this Republic, who believes that another course should be pursued, will not, I take it, be deterred from expressing that opinion because of such grave charges against him, which are unwarranted by the facts.

These two resolutions, the one presented by the Senator from Georgia and the other by the Senator from Indiana, as I believe, fairly represent the different views of the two great parties throughout the United States of America. The main features of the resolution by the Senator from Georgia will be indorsed and supported by all those who believe we in this country are yet bound by a written Constitution, by all those who believe in the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence, by all

those who believe that we should follow the advice of the fathers of the Republic when they said we should avoid entangling alliances with foreign nations.

On the other hand, the resolution introduced by the Senator from Indiana, as I infer from the surroundings, represents the views of the President of the United States and the members of his Administration. I say I assume it represents the views of the President because of the Senator who introduced it, because it has been indorsed by the leading Administration newspapers throughout the country, and because of the countenance, encouragement, and congratulations which were showered upon the Senator from Indiana by high Cabinet officials and others connected with the Administration. I therefore submit that these two resolutions join issue, which is to be submitted throughout the United States to the American people, as to the final disposition of the Philippine Islands.

The resolution introduced by the Senator from Indiana asserts, in my opinion, a power as absolute as was ever claimed by the most despotic government the world has ever known. Neither the Czar of Russia nor the Emperor of Germany could claim more absolute power than is claimed in the resolution introduced by the Senator from Indiana. He says that those islands shall be controlled as the situation demands. The Congress of the United States are to judge of what the situation there demands, and are then to exercise such control as in their judgment they may think necessary.

We are not to be restrained by the written Constitution of the United States of America: we are not to be handicapped by any rights or privileges which those people may claim. If the situation demands it, under that resolution there is no power which has ever been exercised by the greatest and most despotic government in this world which can not be exercised there. If the situation demands it, we may imprison men for an unlimited time without informing them of the nature of the charges against them; we may inflict capital punishment without confronting them with witnesses, without trial, and without jury.

Louis XIV of France in the very height of his power, when he filled the Bastille with men without informing them of the char-

acter of the charges against them, never exercised more despotic power than is proposed to be lodged in the Congress of the United States by the joint resolution offered by the Senator from Indiana. And yet we find men in high position who say that it is "non-sense to call this imperialism." I should like to ask, Mr. President, what is imperialism, if it be not the assertion of a power that we, and we alone, are the judges of what is necessary, and that we will exercise such control as the situation demands?

I assert, then, that that resolution, indorsed by the President of the United States and by the members of this Administration, if it is to be the policy to be pursued, is imperialism, absolute and unconditional. It is hardly necessary for me to say that I am unalterably and forever opposed to any such assertion of power by the Government of the United States. I believe we are restrained by a written Constitution, which we have sworn to support, and I believe that the happiness of this people will be best secured by following that Constitution.

But, Mr. President, let us see what arguments are brought forward to sustain the position which has been taken, so different from those which have controlled the Republic in all of its past history; let us see what reasons are given by those who advocate such a policy as to why we should depart from the principles laid down by Jefferson and the founders of the Republic. There are but two main reasons I have ever heard given; and yet, Mr. President, they are not good reasons. The same reasons that are given to-day why we should pursue this course of conduct in the Philippines have been given. I think, by every government in the history of the past which has sought to acquire additional territory by force of arms, or sought to crush out the liberties of another people. The reasons given in this case, I say, have been given in every case where governments have sought to gain territory by force and without right and without justice.

The first of these reasons is that it is the will of the Lord, that the Lord has selected certain persons as trustees. To use the exact language of the Senator from Indiana, "He has selected them as trustees under Him, and has marked them as His chosen people hereafter to lead in the regeneration of the world."

Mr. President, when an American citizen has such confidence

in his own ability and in his own judgment as to believe that the Lord has selected him to do the identical things which the Lord has said shall not be done. I realize that that man is in a condition of mind incapable of judging impartially. When men assume that they are trustees of the Lord to violate His written word I want some testimony besides their own assertion that they have any such trusteeship.

The Good Book of the Lord says, "Thou shalt not kill;" "Thou shalt not steal;" "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" and yet men will come and say that the Lord has made them His trustees to commit every one of these acts upon which he has put the seal of His condemnation. And I say they are mistaken about their appointment.

As I said, Mr. President, this is not the first time this power has been claimed. If I correctly remember history, when Mohammed sought to conquer the entire world and impose his peculiar religious views upon all people, his soldiers went to battle with the cry, "There is but one God and Mohammed is His prophet." And when they murdered helpless women and children they said, "It is the will of the Lord; it is the will of the Lord."

When the Spanish Government was at the height of its power, when those who ruled it argued that it was necessary that they should expand their territory in order that they might grow and live, they sent Cortez to Mexico and Pizarro to Peru, where their paths were marked by death and desolation, by burning houses and murdered women and children, and yet they claimed this was all done in the name of the Lord, though its real object was to increase Spanish commerce and to pour wealth into the lap of the Spanish nation.

So, Mr. President, it has been everywhere, and it is even so today. I think that I have read somewhere that the Emperor of Germany asserts that he is the head trustee, representing the Lord in the regeneration of the world. Those are the kinds of arguments which are urged upon us to induce us to violate the Constitution of the United States, to induce us to trample on every precept of our fathers, to induce us to do an act indeed which, in my opinion, no time can ever cure and which will eventually de-

stroy the very foundations of the Government itself. I deny the authority of those who claim such a trusteeship. I call for the proof of the appointment of these pretended trustees. I say such a trusteeship does not exist, for it would be folly to argue that a man who does wrong is following out the precepts of Him who taught us that order and truth and justice were the great virtues of mankind.

Mr. President, what is the other argument? It is that these men are trustees for the regeneration of the world, and they also claim that it will pay to do that work; that it will bring wealth into the lap of this nation; that it will increase our commerce and open the ports of China to us; that if we pursue such a course the country will grow greater, and stronger, and richer. I deny that proposition. It is true that such a course may bring wealth to some individuals, but I deny that it will bring wealth and prosperity to the great body of the American people. And yet the argument has been used recently, and an appeal has been made to the people of the Southern States especially, that if we adopt the policy of controlling by absolute force and power the Philippine Islands, denying them the right to govern themselves, which we promised to the people of Cuba, it will tend to increase the commerce of the South; that our citizens engaged in the growing and manufacture of cotton will have additional markets for their products and thus the price of cotton will be increased.

Mr. President, I assert here to-day that if we should adopt the resolution offered by the Senator from Georgia, immediately throughout the archipelago we would be granted every right, every privilege of commerce that we can secure by force; that those people would be glad to yield to us all rights in the way of coaling and naval stations we may desire; that they would be glad to grant us the privileges of free trade as to the importation and exportation of goods, and that there is no advantage in the way of commerce which would not come with additional force if we should make this peaceful and just and fair settlement with the Filipinos.

On the contrary, so far as the cotton spinners of the South are concerned, it seems to me that if we are to wield absolute power in the Philippines, the great trusts of the United States, the men of wealth, the men who have urged the President to this un-

American course which he has pursued, would by their combined wealth and direct taxation in the Philippines secure labor at a cost of 10 cents a day, erect cotton factories there, secure special privileges from the governor-general, and thereby competing with the people of the South in the price of cotton goods, absolutely putting cotton at ruinous prices. There is no difficulty there, I am told, in getting any amount of labor at 10 cents a day. If laborers there should ask more than 10 cents a day, the governor-general whom you send there with this unlimited power would no doubt use such power to fix such price as he should choose. Oh, but you may say, this will not be done.

I state, Mr. President, that under the resolution of the Senator from Indiana it can be done. We have been before told where unlimited power was sought that it would never be used. Away back in the days of 1868, when there were Senators on this floor who urged that reconstruction measures should be passed, we were told that American citizens would never abuse such power. Senators then contended that if the power was given they feared it would be used. The power was given, and we all remember the abuse which followed. For four years robbery, oppression, and every form of injustice prevailed to such an extent that it shocked the civilized world and brought a stain upon the American name. To tell me that if you grant absolute power unrestrained by the Constitution your governor-general and your carpetbaggers sent to distant islands will never abuse that power is to tell me what I do not believe.

But, Mr. President, whether it would pay in the South or not, I have such confidence in the Southern people that I believe the first question they will ask will be, "Is the policy just? Is it fair?" They will not, in my judgment, consider for one moment the benefits which may come to them until they have first determined whether the course proposed is in accordance with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and is right in itself. It has been the pride and the glory of the Southern people from the time this Government was organized to hold liberty, truth, and justice far above all money consideration.

Mr. President, if you ask the Southern people to use force to strike down the liberties of the Philippine people, to deny them the

right of self-government. they will not forget that in the great contest with the United States in the civil war nineteen-twentieths of those who fought in the Southern army did not fight to extend and perpetuate slavery, but they fought for the rights of home rule and local self-government, because they believed those rights were guaranteed to them by the Declaration of Independence. Therefore, I trust that that people will not recede from the high and lofty position which they have always taken, and that they will contend that truth and justice and honor are still to stand far above the personal gain that you hold out to them in such glittering generalities.

As I have stated, Mr. President, these are the two main arguments which have been used why the policy should be pursued which the Administration seeks to justify. Let us see for a moment. I promise to be brief in that regard. What are the facts which led us to the present situation? Some three hundred or more years ago—I do not recall the exact time—Spain by her arms had conquered the inhabitants of the island of Cuba and of the Philippine Islands. She has exercised over them since that time a colonial government; she has ruled them precisely as the present Administration proposes to rule the inhabitants of the Philippines to-day; she has given them the most cruel, the most oppressive government under which any people have ever lived.

From time to time in desperation the people of those countries sought to throw off the Spanish authority and to win the liberties to which all people are entitled. Once or twice, when victory was almost within their grasp, the promises of Spain for better government, for autonomy, for home rule and local government, induced the people to lay down their arms, and just as regularly as they did so Spain forgot her promises, and no reform was ever made. This had gone to such an extent that in 1838, after some three years of insurrection in the Cuban Isle, when the outrages perpetrated by the Spanish soldiers were so great, and the sufferings of starving women and the starving children were depicted in the Senate and throughout the United States, the American people rose almost as one man and said that these outrages right under the shadow of our flag should continue no longer; they said that Spain must withdraw her power or war would result.

Mr. President, so particular and so cautious were the people of the United States that they should not be misunderstood, that they might not be accused of improper motives in the declaration of war made by Congress, any disposition was disclaimed to acquire territory, and there was also disclaimed any selfish purpose on the part of this Government, basing its action upon the broad ground of humanity, to enable the oppressed people of Cuba to secure to themselves the best possible kind of government, and that they should be free and independent; and I assert to-day that while the Philippine Islands were not named in that resolution, this Government is in honor bound to give them the same free government that we promised Cuba.

What was the result? Our young men in every part of the country rushed to arms with an enthusiasm and a patriotism which has never been excelled, and the glorious victories in the harbor of Manila and the harbor of Santiago and on the hills of San Juan showed what a great and free people could do when they were actuated by disinterested motives and only sought to relieve the oppressed of another country.

What was the condition at that time of the people of the Philippines? They, too, had sought liberty, they had been on the verge of victory, then promises were made to them, and they laid down their arms; but when the people of those islands heard that this great Republic, which desires that all people shall be free, was at war with their long-time oppressor, I can imagine the joy that thrilled the hearts of the people throughout the entire islands when they heard that Dewey had destroyed the naval power of their oppressor in the harbor of Manila.

There was not more rejoicing throughout the United States of America than there was throughout the Philippines. They hoped the time would come when their long-sought-for liberty and independence would be within their grasp. If they had had any doubt before, when Admiral Dewey put their exiled leaders at Hongkong upon American ships and brought them back with others to the islands, placed arms and ammunitions and supplies in their hands, their breasts were so full of hope that within a few weeks they rallied with such enthusiasm as to drive the Spaniards from every province except that of Manila.

They were only prevented from taking it by the advice of the American commanders. Knowing that we had promised the Cuban people that they should be free, knowing that they had aided us and that they had been our allies in the contest with the Spaniards in Manila, can you imagine that they did not expect and believe that the same treatment would be given them? And when it began to dawn on their minds that there was doubt about it, naturally, having dealt with Spain, they became uneasy and suspicious. They sent a man here to see the President of the United States, to offer this Government any kind of concession that it might demand. He came here in good faith, and yet the President refused even to give him audience. Not only that, but the Administration newspapers of this city denounced him as a spy and threatened to have him court-martialed and shot if he remained in the country. Finally he fled to Canada, and from there to England or France or to some other country.

Mr. President, not only this, but when the Peace Commission met at Paris, then, for the first time, it was given out that it was the intention of the United States to purchase and permanently hold the absolute sovereignty of those islands. Then it was, after the treaty was signed, but before it was ratified by the Senate, that the President of the United States issued that unfortunate proclamation of December 28, known as the benevolent assimilation proclamation. Bear in mind that this was done before the Senate had agreed to the treaty; that it was done at a time when we were seeking to get an amendment on the treaty, making the same promise to the Philippines which we had made to Cuba. He then put forth that declaration which claimed absolute sovereignty for the United States, and notified them that we would take possession of the islands. The Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. HOAR], a few days since, furnished the absolute and incontrovertible testimony that it was that proclamation which brought on the clash of arms and which has caused all the suffering. So certain was General Otis that it would cause bloodshed that he struck out portions of it, but the Filipinos secured a copy of the original.

I assert here to-day that if the President had stated in his proclamation that he had no doubt Congress would grant them the

same rights and privileges that we had promised Cuba, there would never have been a gun fired, and all this expenditure of money and all this loss of life of our best and our bravest soldiers would have been avoided. It came from that proclamation. There the responsibility rests, and there is no power to relieve those of it who are responsible for it. I will do the President the justice to say that I do not believe he did it willingly. I believe that he yielded after long pressure, after the persuasion and importunity of those who sought this mode of procedure for commercial speculation for themselves, and that the President of the United States only yielded after they had made him believe that a majority of the people of the United States approved that course.

But, Mr. President, he did yield, and the responsibility rests upon him and those who induced him to issue that proclamation, and not upon the men who tried to avoid it. I do not think it is either brave or manly or truthful for those who are responsible for the issuance of that proclamation, and who refused to grant the people of the Philippines the same rights we had promised to Cuba, to come here "howling like slaves whipped to their burden," and say, "You all did it because you opposed our course." If I had believed that I was a trustee under God to bring more wealth to this nation and my advice had been followed, I never would have come back and sought to avoid all responsibility and to charge upon the men who had used every effort to secure a peaceful settlement that they were chargeable with the death of our soldiers.

But that is the condition presented to-day. Mr. President, it is not yet too late. It is too late to save the lives of the brave Lawton and many others who have fallen there; it is too late to call back the expenditure of money; but it is not too late for this great and free Government of ours to disclaim responsibility for these wrongs and to do that which is right. If we to-day, followed by the House of Representatives and the President, would adopt the resolution proposed by the Senator from Georgia, I assert that not another gun would be fired in the archipelago.

I believe we should do an act which would place this great Government upon the highest pinnacle of fame. We stand to-day equal or superior to any other nation in the world. There is no

human being who could claim that in doing this act of justice we are actuated by any motive except an honest one, or that we right the wrong which has been done through fear. We are the absolute masters of the situation. If, occupying that position, we rise to the necessities of this great occasion and assure these people that they shall be free, we will prove to the world that we were honest when we said that we went to war not for conquest, but in order to give freedom to others. I assert that if we should do that we would command the respect of every nation in the world and deserve the love and admiration of our own people.

But we are told it is too late. We are told again and again that the majority of the people of the United States have approved the policy of the President. Mr. President, I do not know how that is. Neither do the men know who make the assertion. I believe that if to-day a vote should be taken on these resolutions, disconnected from party politics, removed from all the great questions which divide the two political parties, if it could be submitted fairly to the country, an overwhelming majority would declare in favor of the resolution of the Senator from Georgia. We know that an overwhelming majority of the Democrats in the country are in favor of it. We know that the great body of our German and Irish American citizens are in favor of it. We know that the laboring people from one end of this country to the other indorse it and favor it, and that the great organization known as the Federation of Labor, said to represent 800,000 workingmen, but recently unanimously indorsed it.

We know, too, that there are thousands of Republicans who believe that the course of the Administration is inexcusable and unjustifiable, but their party allegiance and other great questions which are involved in the contest between the two parties prevent them from saying so. If anyone passes an opinion that a majority of the people of the country favor the President's policy, I say he does not know, and I do not know, but I believe a majority of the people of America believe in honor and justice, and I think I know that honor, good faith, and justice demand that we should give to these people the same freedom that we have promised to the people of Cuba. I believe that the future hope and prosperity of this country depend upon pursuing the course laid down in the



resolution offered by the Senator from Georgia, and whether a majority be for it or against it, speaking for myself and believing that the honor of the Republic in which we live is involved, believing that no other course which we can pursue is honorable, no power on this earth could make me support resolutions of the character offered by the Senator from Indiana [Mr. BEVERIDGE] or pursue the course advocated by the Administration and a large number of Republicans throughout the country.

But, Mr. President, when all other arguments fail, when those who favor these un-American and unconstitutional methods can find no other words, they fall back and say that wherever the flag once floats there it shall stay. It seems to me that the men who made this Government great in the past, that our ancestors who wrote the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, would answer that proposition and say that if the American flag can not float at any particular point in honor it had best not float at all. But I think I will answer this last argument in the language of a prominent lawyer in my own State, who but a few days ago said that "those who seek to raise the American flag above the crushed liberties of another people have already begun to haul it down from the Capitol of their own country." Such is my belief, and, believing so, I trust that whatever feeling may have been engendered in the past in regard to this matter, the calm and deliberate judgment of the Senate will be brought to the consideration of these resolutions.

I believe with the Senator from Massachusetts that it is the most important question which has confronted the American people for a century. I believe upon this action will depend, in a large measure, the stability of the Republic in which we live, and I trust, then, without feeling, without party prejudice, the Senate will rise to the high position which it has occupied in the past and will reaffirm the declaration laid down when we declared war against Spain, that we did not fight for conquest, that we fought to liberate the distressed and give them a free government, and having planted ourselves upon that high doctrine, that we will not place a stain upon the fair name of this Republic by using the power which has come to us from a war begun for freedom to wrong and oppress another people.

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